

Around the Services

Compiled by SSG John Valceanu



Cpl. Jimmie Perkins

Sgt. Bill Osborne, a member of the 26th MEU, is one of 21 marines who visited elementary schools in Mobile, Ala., to support the Rolling Readers program.

Marines, Sailors Promote Reading

Mobile, Ala. — Marines and sailors of the 26th Marine Expeditionary unit visited elementary schools here to support the Rolling Readers program.

"It was an interesting experience for me and them; it made me feel like a role model," said Lance Cpl. Fred Klein, a radio operator with the 26th MEU.

Rolling Readers is a non-profit organization that matches volunteers in the community with at-risk elementary pupils. It brings adults into the classrooms to read and share their experiences with the children, said Lela Lowe, a director of the program.

"This is the first opportunity we've had to bring members of the armed services to the schools," Lowe said.

On three days, 21 marines and sailors visited 84 classes at seven elementary schools.

"I did this because I wanted to read to the kids and show them that marines are approachable, that we care about them too," said Sgt. Rhone S. Freeman, an administrative

clerk with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 264. — *Cpl. Jimmy Perkins, 26th MEU Public Affairs Office*

USAF Transports Poles to Kosovo

Ramstein Air Base, Germany

— The U.S. Air Force airlifted Polish soldiers and equipment to Mitrovica, Kosovo, in April as part of a buildup of NATO forces in the Yugoslav province.

"This was the first movement of Polish forces aboard U.S. aircraft in support of a

NATO requirement," said Senior Master Sgt. John McAllister, superintendent of the Headquarters, U.S. Air Forces, Europe, Air Mobility Operations Control Center here. "In terms of airlift support, this was a small movement, but in terms of impact and significance, it was huge."

A C-17 Globemaster III from Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., flew to southwestern Poland to begin moving 130 Polish soldiers and their equipment, which included 20 armored vehicles and jeeps.

The troops, from Poland's 10th Infantry Battalion, are part of a reserve force deployed to Mitrovica to augment NATO's peacekeeping mission in Kosovo.

Using one C-17, aircrews on temporary assignment to Ramstein took four days to complete the airlift, which included flying about 205,000 pounds of cargo and equipment. — *Tech. Sgt. Joe Bela, USAFE News Service*

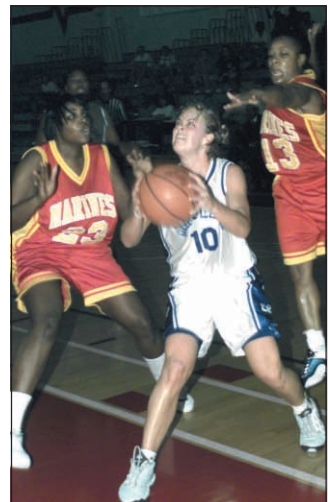
Army Captures Basketball Championship

Randolph Air Force Base, Texas

— The Army women's basketball team captured the

Women's Armed Forces Basketball Championship for the ninth year in a row, winning all six of its games in the April competition.

A strong rebounding game and swarming defense propelled the soldiers to the cham-



David Terry

Air Force 2nd Lt. Kallie Quinn goes for a shot as Lance Cpl. Keena Brock (left) and Gunnery Sgt. Annette Mitchell defend.

pionship with an average margin of victory of 35 points per game over the Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy. The Marines posted a 4-2 mark to finish second.

MSG Johnnie Pickett, the Army team's coach, said he had no problems keeping his players focused during the armed forces rivalry.

"We understand that we're representing 495,000 soldiers, so it's easy to stay motivated when you think about that," said Pickett, who has been the Army head coach for 10 years.

The Army women have dominated the interservice basketball competition since its 1978 inception with titles in 21 of the 23 previous championships. — *Air Force Master Sgt. Mike Briggs, American Forces Press Service*



MSG Keith Reed

Kosovo-bound soldiers of the Polish 10th Infantry Battalion board a C-17 Globemaster III at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.